ALEXANDRIA

THE NEW EXPERIENCE

2016 // 2026 ARTS & CULTURE MASTER PLAN

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Table of Contents

02/
THE LEADERSHIP TEAM
City Leadership
Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Steering Committee

03/
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
A bold vision for Alexandria

07/
GOALS & STRATEGIES
Introduction

08/
ARTS & CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL
Goal 1: Achieve equity, inclusion and access for arts, cultural, and creative endeavors

09/
INNOVATION
Goal 2: Facilitate opportunities for innovation and collaboration

11/
ARTS ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS
Goal 3: Support and foster a sustainable and diverse community of the arts

13/
COMMUNITY ARTS
Goal 4: Be a convener and facilitator for Artistic and Culture

17/
LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE
Goal 5: Raise community awareness of the Office of the Arts as a leadership agency

25/
IMPLEMENTATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Bold Vision For Alexandria

INTRODUCTION

This is a 10-year master plan to guide the work of the Office of the Arts (OA). It provides a framework and the Alexandria Commission for the Arts (Arts Commission) in developing annual priorities and work plans aligning with available resources and prevailing budgets. It is intended that implementation will be guided through the existing effective task force structure with the OA and Arts Commission, consistent with implementation of the Public Art Implementation Plan. The first step upon adoption of this plan is to outline immediate priorities and identify programs and activities to launch this plan.

This plan embodies the belief that creativity is essential to the core of the city, and the recognition that being a vibrant "arts city" is a deeply held value. Alexandria residents are engaged in creative endeavors as professionals and through extensive personal participation. Alexandria is home to renowned professional institutions including the Torpedo Factory Arts Center, Metro Stage, and the Alexandria Symphony, as well as institutions that foster and support creative expression ranging from the Art League to Del Ray Artisans, and the Harmonizers and numerous community-based ensembles.

This plan seeks to balance the unique history, institutions and values of Alexandria with a vision for an enhanced cultural life. It is built on a foundation of understanding the current environment for the cultural community and for the creative life of residents, and articulates a strategic framework that begins with building capacity for the Office of the Arts and radiates out to cultural institutions, artists, neighborhoods and important partners to bring the plan to fruition.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Alexandria is steeped in powerful cultural memory.
Alexandria's history is inexplicitly connected to the ideals of our country, and its preservation of history is a central element of the city's identity. The caretaking of that heritage is a fundamental choice of Alexandrians – considered to be a civic responsibility in the perpetual storytelling of shared beliefs in democracy and freedom. That storytelling is part of what makes Alexandria a highly desired destination for cultural and heritage tourism, and for attracting new residents and families, making Alexandria one of the fastest growing and most culturally diverse cities in the country.

Today, Alexandria is a city of fiercely proud, longtime residents and of new, young, educated, and global professionals Attracted to the resourceful region surrounding Alexandria, these new residents include an international population, looking to pursue careers in innovation industries and start new businesses. The underlying assumption is new residents and longtime Alexandrians have different aspirations regarding quality-of-life interests. In fact, they share the same desire for engaging civic amenities – good schools, up-to-date recreational facilities, a variety of entertainment venues, and accessible arts and cultural resources. In many ways every resident wants be a part of the developmental, intellectual and emotional memory of the city, with a view toward **Alexandria - the new experience.**

Alexandria is a dynamic city.
Although all residents share a vision of a vibrant Alexandria, how they see this represented in arts and culture may be very different. To many, arts are embodied in the rich history of the city and the stories of longtime residents. To others, the arts are personified through the Torpedo Factory Arts Center legacy. And for some, it is about the diversity of artists who live and work in the many corners of Alexandria. Many younger residents believe the Alexandria arts scene is in need of an innovative, creative push towards the 21st century, while some tenured residents are focused on maintaining more traditional arts activities. Most agree, as in many other global cities, Alexandria is experiencing rapid social, cultural and economic change. New, small, creative businesses are opening their doors; development is booming; the population is becoming more diverse; and residents are seeking more opportunity for participation in personally relevant creative expression. Challenges exist with increased costs of living and housing, finding affordable spaces for artists and nonprofit organizations, and dedication of government resources.

Alexandrians are skillfully balancing the tension between focusing on the city's legacy of great historic relevance while making room for a new generation of residents, as evidenced by the ever-growing and increasingly diversified population. This plan's intent is to support and create arts and culture for all of Alexandria's peoples-reflecting and embracing the history, the innovation, the entrepreneurial spirit, and the future of the city.

THE PROCESS

This plan resulted from an extensive engagement process in which over 200 individual residents participated in a series of open houses and community meetings; more than 100 individuals participated in two town halls. 90-plus cultural leaders, business leaders, individual artists participated in discussion groups and in-depth interviews and over 500 people completed a survey. The appendix of this plan includes a community engagement summary.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ARTS AND CULTURE?

There are different meanings for the terms "arts" and "culture" and their meanings often change in different contexts. This plan adopts an expansive, inclusive definition of the arts and culture. It includes:

- *A range of arts, cultural and creative sectors: fine arts, as well as popular, traditional and commercial arts.*
- *A range of people: visual and performing artists, craftspeople, makers, creative workers, designers, culinary artists, arts educators, cultural practitioners, avocational artists, and consumers.*
- *A range of cultural events: performances, exhibitions, festivals, and celebrations.*

"Culture" is most often defined in anthropological terms.[1] It includes traditions, historical resources, community heritage and forms of expression valued, practiced, and preserved by a community. Culture shapes how we view the world and is integrated into all aspects of daily life. It comes alive through creativity, whether participating as an audience member, maker, creator, patron or consumer. And, importantly, when public spaces are vibrant and full of the life of a community.

Arts, culture, and creativity are among a community's most powerful assets. They distinguish each community and allow residents to better understand and celebrate the uniqueness of their lives. Arts, culture, and creativity are a competitive tool, strengthening many elements of civic life, including the economy, workforce development, education, youth development, neighborhood development, redevelopment, sustainability, and cultural equity. An increasing body of research documents how thoughtful cultural policy is essential to civic health. Cultural planning is a primary tool for organizing the best use of this critical asset. This plan fundamentally views cultural planning as holding up a mirror to the Alexandria community and reflects the community's diverse needs, aspirations, history and capacities.

[1] *A standard textbook definition is: The system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning. (Bates and Plog, "Cultural Anthropology," McGraw Hill, 1990)*

Overarching Theme

As is the nature of local arts agencies in the United States, public support for the arts is more than the transactional function of grant-making. Beyond funding, local arts agencies have a developmental role, providing guidance, expert advice, and serving as guardians of the public trust to procure and deliver equity and excellence in managing the city's arts, cultural, and heritage resources. As an agency of city government, that guardianship is charged with balancing social accountability systems to demonstrate the civic and economic impact of allocating tax dollars to fund creative enterprise. When that balance is in place, city governments can take pride in a thriving arts ecology that makes visible the high values of investing in the arts. Alexandria residents acknowledge that arts and cultural activity give the city its unique standing among great American cities as a vibrant and compelling place to live, work, and visit. The undertaking of an arts and cultural plan by the City of Alexandria reveals possibilities for growth in the arts and cultural sectors, building and focusing the function of special events, and addressing internal challenges in order to achieve plan goals. This includes redefining the role of the Office of the Arts, reviewing and developing policy that fosters cultural development, long-term financial commitment to supporting a redefined role, and strategic inter-governmental collaborations. These steps are the platform for tactical implementation of this plan over the next ten years.

The Five Core Goals

GOAL ONE

Achieve equity, inclusion and access for arts, cultural, and creative endeavors.

GOAL TWO

Facilitate opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

GOAL THREE

Support and foster a sustainable and diverse community of the arts.

GOAL FOUR

Be a convener and facilitator for artistic and cultural expression.

GOAL FIVE

Raise community awareness of the Office of the Arts as it continues to evolve as a leadership agency.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Introduction

The development of a Cultural Plan by the City of Alexandria has not only revealed possibilities for growth in the arts and cultural sectors, but also presented the internal challenges that will need to be addressed in order to achieve the goals and objectives summarized in this plan. Achieving these aspirational goals will not come easy as making systemic change requires policy review, commitment, and strategic inter-governmental collaborations. Further, achieving the goals of this plan will require staff review of administrative structures, customer service standards, sustainability of new initiatives, and advocacy, openness, and improved communications across city departments and with a long list of pubic stakeholders.

THESE WILL REQUIRE

- An analysis of staffing structures and professional development opportunities; focusing on talent, core competencies, performance and adaptability to ensure the city's Office of the Arts has an adequate workforce to respond to its unique role as a partner with the public and the private sector.

- Confidence in the public process and the courage to take risks and explore new ideas for bringing about effective and more efficient responses to the changing role of the arts in neighborhood and community development.

- Specific and measurable outcomes related to inclusion and equity, which may require rebuilding arts grant-making guidelines to reflect a stronger position on return-on-investment. With guidance from the Office of the Arts, the city should consider making a sustainability case for diversity, through which new talent, new audiences, and new funding bases can be found to multiply the impact of city funding.

- Strengthening the resilience of arts and cultural organizations by providing incubator and management assistance initiatives, through a wide range of partnerships with internal and external funding bodies. This underpinning support for arts and cultural organizations can further develop their fundraising capacities, management skills, data collection, and their use of digital technology to engage more audiences and increase earned revenue to support organizational development while leveraging the city's contribution to arts and cultural services.

ARTS & CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

GOAL ONE

Achieve equity, inclusion and access for arts, cultural and creative endeavors.

1

Equity, access, and inclusion in the arts are national conversations. Cities and local agencies across the country are currently developing policy statements, programs, and broad-based initiatives to address these concerns. In Alexandria, for cultural, racial, and ethnic equity and inclusion to be systemic, the city and the Office of the Arts should take a leadership role in recognizing the contributions of all residents, supporting all communities, and implementing model programs. While equity policies support systemic change, access may be addressed through programming and partnerships, providing actionable solutions to ensure broader participation by more residents throughout Alexandria.

Alexandria' s population represents people from every part of the world and many honor their own cultures through unique artistic and cultural expression. As cited in the Diversity Report by the Department of Planning and Zoning (February, 2015) nearly 30% of the population of Alexandria is foreign-born and it is anticipated that this percentage will continue to grow. At the same time, there is a large African-American population, with many families residing in Alexandria for several generations. Representing and celebrating Alexandria' s many different cultures through the policies, programs, and activities of the Office of the Arts is a priority of this planning effort.

Build the capacity of the Office of the Arts to serve as a role model for best practices in equity and access.

1.1

1.1.1
Work towards the development of guiding principles and policies committing to equity, access, and inclusion in city arts and cultural activities and with the Commission for the Arts.

1.1.2
Facilitate and sponsor a series of cultural competency training programs for staff and commissioners to recognize and acknowledge that differences in language, age, culture, socio-economic status, political and religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, and life experiences add challenging dimensions to the dynamics of cross cultural interactions. (cross reference with 1.6).

1.1.3
Recruit implementation task force members to broadly represent the geographic, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups that reflect the diversity of Alexandria.

1.1.4
Investigate and pursue arts funding strategies for community-initiated projects and collaborative funding mechanisms.

1.1.5
Create an asset inventory of all available arts and cultural resources in neighborhoods.

1.1.6
Explore ways to infuse arts into appropriate city projects that address city priorities such as housing, youth services, transportation, health and wellness, and recreational arts programming.

TIMELINE
Near-term to mid-term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Office of Human Rights; Human Rights Commission; private philanthropy; Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority

OUTCOMES
Department equity policy; increase in funding opportunities; increase incommunity-initiated projects; comprehensive arts and cultural inventory of spaces and other resources

MODEL
See Appendix: AFTA Cultural Equity Policy and AFTA Editable Cultural Statement

Work to eliminate access barriers to arts and cultural programming for all residents, communities, and groups including underserved constituencies (homeless, veterans, seniors, and intellectually and physically disabled populations).

1.2

1.2.1

Work with community leaders and organizations to identify barriers including financial (cost), geographic (transportation), attitudinal (feeling welcome), and cultural (relevance) and issues of universal access.

1.2.2

Support arts and cultural organizations to serve and engage diverse audiences and visitors through culturally relevant and accessible programming. Develop options to incentivize programming in neighborhood settings and with underserved communities.

TIMELINE

Mid-term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Organizations representing diverse or underserved communities; professional arts and cultural organizations; community arts organizations

OUTCOMES

Broadened audiences for arts and cultural institutions and organizations; increased programming in underserved/under-resourced communities and neighborhoods

MODELS

See Appendix: Model Grants Programs

Encourage and support programs celebrating cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity throughout Alexandria in traditional and non-traditional spaces.

1.3

1.3.1
Work with arts and cultural institutions and organizations to create collaborations and opportunities for programming "outside of the walls."

1.3.2
Support and facilitate cultural programming in non-traditional venues and throughout Alexandria' s neighborhoods. This may include partnerships with recreation centers and libraries.

1.3.3
Engage diverse, qualified artists to provide programming in neighborhood settings.

1.3.4
Establish appropriate advisory taskforces to explore tangible initiatives that elevate the community narratives.

TIMELINE
Near-term to mid-term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Internal Parks and Recreation staff; arts and cultural institutions and organizations; diverse community leaders; local artists

OUTCOMES
Increase in programming in neighborhoods; increase in engagement of local artists; diverse programming in existing spaces and non-traditional spaces

MODELS
Staff will research models that reflect our goals

INNOVATION

GOAL TWO

Facilitate opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

2

The City of Alexandria has tremendous potential to use its existing resources and spaces for innovative and new opportunities for residents. A number of arts and community spaces exist in the city, many known by the community, and some not well known, that serve as an extraordinary resource to create initiatives connecting those in need of spaces with those that have spaces. Also, keeping up with residential demand, new housing and retail areas are being developed at a rapid pace. For new residential communities, many lack activity, as it takes time to develop culture and creativity in new communities. These new places hold promise for as new environments of innovation. Community artists have the ability to create site-specific, community-relevant projects in small spaces, and to animate open public spaces for entire communities or neighborhoods.

Limitations such as existing bureaucratic systems, cost-prohibitive fee structures, and perceived risk of involving communities in nontraditional arts events can hold artists back from playing significant roles in activation of places and spaces. Reevaluating policies can help artists to become partners in increasing activation of spaces and public participation of the arts.

Capitalize on existing city venues and spaces to grow arts programming (performance, visual art exhibition and studio, rehearsal, etc.) for the residents of the city.

2.1

2.1.1

Reimagine existing spaces in Alexandria, possibly as collaborative community arts center. Convene community groups to develop the vision and strategy for where the center(s) are and what they offer. This may include fundraising partners, private sector support, tiered usage fees, guest curators, etc.

2.1.2

Assess the availability of existing unused or vacant spaces and properties throughout the city and create an inventory of potential spaces. Use the list as a basis to connect those in need of space with those who have space.[2]

TIMELINE

Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Community arts leaders; City planning

OUTCOMES

Inventory of all current and potential arts spaces; maximized utilization of city and community spaces

MODEL

See Appendix: Model Community Arts Centers

[2]*Currently SpaceFinder DC maintains a distinct option of searching for available spaces in Alexandria. They may be a potential partner in providing an existing on-line platform that could be edited and amended as additional spaces are identified. http://dc.spacefinder.org*

Be a catalyst to developing creative maker spaces and intentional incubators.

2.2

2.2.1

Work with existing businesses (possibly through the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership) and higher educational institutions to develop economically viable creative maker/incubator and retail spaces in various locations throughout the city.[3]

TIMELINE

Mid-term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Economic Development Partnership; Chamber of Commerce

OUTCOMES

Increase in partnerships with private sectors; increase in creative co-working spaces in Alexandria

MODELS

See Appendix: Arts Incubator Description and Examples

[3] *Visit Alexandria maintains a blog that currently lists eight maker spaces in Alexandria. It can be found at http://blog.visitalexandriava.com/maker-spaces-alexandria-diy/*

Work to plan a signature festival for innovation, arts, and creativity.

2.3

2.3.1

Create a design-oriented or unique arts experience appealing to different sectors and groups in the city. The intent is primarily to connect with the large demographic of young professionals in the community, although will appeal to most residents.

TIMELINE

Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

To be determined dependent on events evaluation (Goal One)

OUTCOMES

Increase in recognition for Alexandria as a destination; Increase in community support for unique events

MODEL

Light City (Baltimore); Art Prize (Grand Rapids, MI)

RAY

ARTS ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

GOAL THREE

Support and foster a sustainable and diverse community of the arts.

3

The arts community sees the city as playing a role in providing support for cultural organizations and artists in Alexandria on several levels, including the Arts Grants Program, the use and availability of facilities, and other programmatic initiatives of the Office of the Arts.

Currently, the primary conduit for support is through the Arts Grants Program (AGP) that has a 31-year history of organizational support. Since 1985, the AGP has awarded $4.15M for programmatic, operating and project support. The current budget is approximately $175,000, nearly 20% lower than its high in 2008 of $215,000. A small portion of this grants budget is matching funds from the Virginia Commission for the Arts. (A chart of city investments in the grants program since 1985 is included in the appendix).

Since 1985, the AGP has awarded grants to 61 different organizations and 30 individual artists. Of the 61 organizations, 28% (17) have received funding for 15 or more years; 15% (9) between 10 and 15 years; 22% (14) between 3 and 9 years; and 35% (21) received program funding only once or, in a few instances, twice.

Arts and cultural organizations traditionally rely on a mix of earned income, government support and private philanthropy to underwrite their operations. In Alexandria, the AGP grants are relatively modest and reach a small number of organizations and as a result, the grants provide a sense of continuity and stability - an annual anchor for planning budgets. The impact is generally one of consistency and continuity. For each of the past three years, between 20 and 24 grants were made to organizations. A total of 28 organizations received funding in one or more of those years. There is an average tenure of 14 years of support for the 28 organizations. Of those 28 organizations only eight have at least one full time staff member and the other 22 are community-based and volunteer-led.

It is important to note that the majority of organizations supported through the AGP are community-based and volunteer-led, with deep community roots, and are an essential element of the creative life of Alexandria. The history of support through the AGP serves as affirmation of their contribution to the civic life of Alexandria. The city's role is one of ensuring a stable, on-going presence by these organizations. For the relatively small number of professionally-run organizations, the AGP provides seed money leveraged to meet more complex operating budgets.

Alexandria is challenged when it comes to leveraging private philanthropy, including foundation funding, business/corporate underwriting, and individual donors. While there are individuals providing philanthropic leadership there are relatively few private foundations, and Alexandria does not enjoy a culture of corporate giving. These realities provide an opportunity to reconsider how public support contributes to a sustainable institutional arts and cultural ecosystem, and how to develop leadership to leverage additional private support. Increases in the level of funds available is a goal of this plan, to maintain essential programs and to build on the leadership role of the Office of the Arts. It is recommended the AGP be reframed to address the needs and resources of the different tiers of the community; to incentivize programs addressing priorities outlined in the goals of this plan; to invest in strengthening the arts and culture sector; and to facilitate the conditions for broader community participation in arts and culture.

PRIORITIES ARE

- *Maintain a pool of funds to support community-based and volunteer-led organizations. Continue commitment of resources to support annual operations and programs ensuring the sustainability and continuation of these organizations that serve as a core outlet for creative endeavors of Alexandria residents.*
- *Increase institutional support for professional organizations that are community assets with a need for a broader, more diversified pool of funding to invest in professional development, innovation, and risk-taking ventures, and for general programs and operations.*
- *Create specific funding sources to support projects celebrating tradition and heritage within the growing immigrant communities in Alexandria.*

Increase the funding base over time for the Arts Grants Program aligning with the goals of this plan.

3.1

TIMELINE

Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Private philanthropy; National Endowment for the Arts; Virginia Commission for the Arts

OUTCOMES

Building and expanding the capacity of professionally managed and curated arts organizations; maintaining a robust ecology of community-based, volunteer-led arts organizations; working towards greater equity and access to public resources; community and neighborhood development

MODEL

See models in 4.2

HAPPY EASTER
Paint BAR
DON'T BE LIKE THE REST OF THEM
darling
ANDERS RUFF
WORKSHOP
BRUSHES
GLOVES
CLOTHS
SAND PAPER

Restructure the Arts Grants Program to recognize the specific institutional needs of fulltime, professionally managed organizations while seeking to maintain the current level of support for the community-based and volunteer-led cultural organizations. A framework for a restructured Arts Grants Program supporting organizations may be:

3.2

3.2.1 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Review and streamline the existing operating grants for organizations with professional staff and annual operating or programmatic grants to ensure stable operations of the largest organizations, while providing support for programmatic depth and exploration.

3.2.2 COMMUNITY-BASED, VOLUNTEER-LED ORGANIZATIONS

Streamline the application process for the existing project grant to encourage more community-based organization applicants.

3.2.3 EMERGING ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Establish a distinct program intended to support emerging organizations, specifically those with fewer than five years of operations, in becoming established. The intent of the program is to encourage new programming in the community and entrepreneurial activity by new and emerging organizations.

3.2.4 ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Create an annual artist fellowship program to support individual artists living and working in Alexandria. Ideally the program would include three categories, new/emerging; mid-career and late-career - to recognize artists across the spectrum of tenure.

3.2.5 SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES, RISK AND INNOVATIONS FUND

Create a fund to incentivize entrepreneurial activity, develop innovative programs, and in special circumstances, to build programmatic or organizational capacity. A competitive grant is awarded each cycle and is open to existing arts organizations, other organizations providing or considering cultural programming, as well as one-time projects developed by non-cultural organizations. These are one-time investments in ideas, regardless of organizational budget size. It is recommended that individuals be eligible as well as organizations.

3.2.6 CAPACITY BUILDING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Create an initiative to increase the management capacities of nonprofits arts organizations. Collaborate with educational institutions for business, marketing, project management, and other leadership development programming. Establish a pool of funds available on a revolving, responsive basis (not through annual awards) to support professional development and organizational capacity.

3.2.7 NEIGHBORHOOD CELEBRATIONS PROGRAM FUND

Create a fund for community-led celebrations encouraging cross-cultural exchange and widening access opportunities for residents and widening access opportunities for residents and visitors. This provides funding along with management and technical support from the office of the Arts. Part of the program will include a database of information to strengthen the capacity of the program.

TIMELINE

Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Virginia Commission on the Arts; private philanthropy; National Endowment for the Arts

OUTCOMES

Realigning the Arts Grants Program to incentivize programs addressing priorities outlined in the goals of this plan; investing in strengthening the arts and culture sector; facilitating the conditions for broader community participation in arts and culture

MODEL

See Appendix: Model Grants Programs, in addition to City of Boulder (CO) Office of Arts and Culture ; and Raleigh (NC) Office of the Arts

Serve as a convener of the Alexandria arts community to facilitate learning of trends in the professional arts field and current professional practices.

3.3

3.3.1

Program semi-annual gatherings of the Alexandria arts community with appropriate speakers and presenters on relevant topics.

TIMELINE

Near Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Alexandria Arts Alliance

OUTCOMES

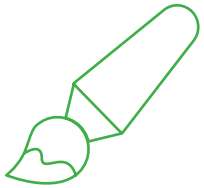
Sharing of national best practices; increase in communication and collaboration in arts community

MODEL

Staff to research models to reflect plan goals

COMMUNITY ARTS

GOAL FOUR



Be a convener and facilitator for artistic and cultural expression.

4

Alexandria residents enjoy a high level of personal participation creative activities. The community participates in literary arts, visual art activities, culinary arts, and more. It is a community of professional and avocational artists. Many of the arts and cultural happenings are often viewed through the lens of the King Street corridor and adjacent blocks of Old Town and/or the Del Ray neighborhood. While these areas are the lively gathering places of Alexandria, there is significant activity occurring outside of these boundaries. And importantly, there is a strong desire by residents to support and enhance activity and resources in neighborhoods not regularly considered including Alexandria West, Potomac Yards and Potomac Green, Eisenhower East, and the Southwest Quadrant. Residents also want this plan to provide more responsive and relevant programming for people of different backgrounds, ages, and abilities; more experiential programming; and an expansion of opportunities and support to neighborhoods.

Communities can take the lead in arts and creative participation. Local arts agencies around the country provide programming to residents and visitors in several ways. Many cities use a "contract for services" process, funding community groups and arts organizations for neighborhood festivals and celebrations. In this way the city supports programs rather than produces or presents them. The city may also incubate programs, such as a multicultural or international arts celebration, with the intention of eventually transferring the responsibility to an outside agency.

Citywide events, programming, and festivals provide opportunities to serve large numbers of constituents, present local artists and creativity, celebrate cultural heritage, and amplify the identity of a community.

Celebrate the diverse neighborhoods of Alexandria through support of existing events and opportunity for new collaborations. (Cross-reference Goal One).

4.1

4.1.1

Convene organizers and community leaders to explore ways to promote and support existing neighborhood events and share best practices.

4.1.2

Develop a neighborhood grant category supporting neighborhood festivals and improved infrastructure for presenting the visual, performing, and literary arts in neighborhood settings. This may also include new community-initiated event funding.

TIMELINE

Mid-Term to Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Event organizers; Community leaders; City planning

OUTCOMES

Increasing support for neighborhood based programming and encouraging neighborhoods to develop events that are relevant to their residents and constituents

MODEL

See Appendix: Model Grants Programs

Develop a community engagement strategy facilitating arts and creative opportunities for every neighborhood and community group. (Cross-reference Goal Two).

4.2

4.2.1
Develop relationships with diverse community leaders throughout Alexandria.

4.2.2
Develop a roster of artists and groups qualified to provide arts programming in community settings. Highlight and promote these artists through city communications.

4.2.3
Identify and work with qualified artists in their own communities to create new artistic projects or events celebrating community and existing programs, such as the Mobile Arts Lab.

4.2.4
Work with the city's public information office on a public awareness and education campaign to raise awareness of happenings in neighborhoods outside of Old Town (Cross-reference: Goal One).

TIMELINE
Mid-Term to Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Community engagement staff; Local artists

OUTCOMES
Robust community engagement plan for arts and creative partnerships; increased awareness and perception of the Office of the Arts

MODEL
Ohio Alliance for Arts Education; Louisiana State University Museum and the City of Baton Rouge; Seattle Arts Commission; Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs

Support and strengthen arts education and life-long learning opportunities in Alexandria.

4.3

4.3.1
Plan a series of convenings of arts educators, parents, and city staff to identify best role for the city in arts education initiatives.

4.3.2
Continue to identify partnerships and collaborations between communities and the school system to strengthen both in-school arts education and out-of-school arts education. This may include the identification of internships and apprenticeships in arts and creative industries.

4.3.3
Connect teachers with community artists to provide collaborative support in and outside of the classroom.

TIMELINE
Near-term - Ongoing

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
School district; Private schools; Higher education leaders; Parent teacher organizations; Youth-focused arts organizations

OUTCOMES
Increase in arts education opportunities for youth inside and outside the school system

MODEL
BPS Arts (Boston); Big Thought (Dallas)

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

GOAL FIVE

Raise community awareness of the Office of the Arts as a leadership agency.

5

In cities across the country, local arts agencies are significant partners in government, working in collaboration with other city departments such as planning, parks and recreation, housing, economic development, public safety, and environmental services, among others. These collaborations are vital for citizens who want to see positive impact on children and young people, on neighborhoods and communities, on the marketing of the city to visitors, on business relocation, and on the shared experiences that create common bonds among residents.

Cultural and creative activity is of great significance to the character and value of Alexandria for residents, workers, and visitors but support systems for living a creative life in Alexandria are not on par with other city priorities such as law enforcement, education and economic prosperity. The Office of the Arts can play a vital role within city government and community development initiatives, helping to solve social problems, inform policy, and build a stronger city that works for everyone.

Throughout the planning process, the Office of the Arts, under the guidance of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities as a division of that department, began its evolution as a significant leader in the arts community. When the process launched in late 2015, the office functioned with a modest staff and a primary charge of operating the grants program, public art program, and general arts programs. Recently, it pivoted to a significantly expanded portfolio encompassing special events management and oversight of the Torpedo Factory Arts Center. The staff has grown to eight FTEs, fundamentally changing the daily operations and the role and reach in the community.

Concurrently during the engagement phase, the community and stakeholders' voiced a strong appeal for the Office of the Arts to take more of a leadership role in the community, shifting focus from program management to supporting, facilitating, and creating a vibrant arts environment for all Alexandria residents and communities.

Alexandria's cultural sector is comprised of approximately 40 organizations, with just a few operating with one or more full-time professional staff members (approximately 20% of organizations). The vast majority of the organizations are community-based, volunteer-led, serving a broad range of creative activities focused on personal participation for the community. Importantly, many are long-standing organizations with rich histories deeply embedded in the fabric of Alexandria.

An expanded leadership role for the Office of the Arts-both internally within city government and externally as a community convener, facilitator, advocate, and policy leader-will benefit arts and cultural organizations and the overall cultural development of Alexandria.

As an initiator of cultural policy and programs serving the residents of the community, the Office can evolve to fill this significant leadership gap. There is a need for additional expertise and financial resources for taking a long-view approach to supporting the diverse cultural expression of all Alexandrians.

Position The Office of the Arts within the construct of the city's decision-making process and prioritize arts and culture as a deliverable of "core" public services.

5.1

5.1.1
Convene regular meetings with heads of city departments involved with planning, public and neighborhood services, libraries and other relevant departments, to explore interdepartmental collaborations.

5.1.2
Continue to collect and share data regarding the economic impact of the arts in Alexandria through the AEP.[4] Explore additional resources such as investing in the Creative Vitality Index.[5]

5.1.3
Spotlight successes of funded organizations and artists to increase visibility of projects that leverage city funds.

5.1.4
Establish a community taskforce to plan and respond to city planning goals across departments as part of the annual workplan process.[6]

TIMELINE
Near-term - Ongoing

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
City leadership; City departments; Arts organizations; Alexandria Economic Development Partnership

OUTCOMES
Enhanced visibility of the Office of the Arts; increased cross-departmental collaborations; quantitative economic impact data.

MODEL
See Appendix: Local Arts Agency Survey Summary results; Art at Work (Portland, ME).

[4]The Office of the Arts regularly participates in the quinquennial Arts and Economic Prosperity study with Americans for the Arts.
[5]http://www.cvsuite.org.
[6]The role of this advisory group is distinct from the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. It is about engaging community expertise and advice for specific initiatives.

Position Special Events within the Office of the Arts as a city resource for facilitating and supporting community-initiated events.

5.2

5.2.1
Conduct an evaluation of citywide events (resident appreciation/value, economic impact, media/publicity, tourism impact, etc.)

5.2.2
Create (or update) Special Events department strategy and guidelines for city events based on results and recommendations.

5.2.3
Work toward efficiencies for city staff event support, identifying intradepartment and cross-departmental roles and responsibilities.

5.2.4
Develop a communications strategy and easy-access guidelines for professional event organizers and community event organizers. This may include online tools, a one-stop shop resource, permitting and public safety information, etc.

5.2.5
Develop strategies to support and promote community-initiated events, neighborhood sponsored events, and cultural celebrations. This may include a low-cost grant fund for community events. (Cross-reference Goal Five).

5.2.6
Develop dual-purpose goals with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote tourist-ready arts activities on the Visit Alexandria timeline.

TIMELINE
Mid-term - Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Outside events evaluation firm; City department leaders; Event organizers

OUTCOMES
Defined strategy and vision for city-funded and sponsored events; improved efficiencies for event support and costs; improved communications about events with organizers and communities

MODEL
See Appendix: Model Grants Programs

Rebrand the Office of the Arts and enhance the arts and cultural city brand.

5.3

5.3.1
Work with the Office of Communications and Public Information on a public information strategy to raise the awareness of the Office of the Arts within the community-at-large through public campaigns, speaking engagements, sponsorships, social media campaigns, and more.

5.3.2
Develop a new narrative about the quality of life in Alexandria. Create a standard toolkit of messages inclusive of arts and creativity, creative sector and economic impact data, diverse communities' arts and cultural events, and more.

5.3.3
Align city brand marketing efforts with Visit Alexandria and Alexandria Economic Development Partnership.

5.3.4
Explore opportunities with educational institutions, other community organizations, and artists to create narratives and highlight stories of arts and creativity for marketing efforts.

TIMELINE
Near-term - Ongoing

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Alexandria Economic Development Partnership,
Visit Alexandria,
City Public Information Office, local media

OUTCOMES
Increased community awareness of the Office of the Arts; increased community awareness of local arts organizations and artists; marketing and messaging toolkit for staff and city departments; increase in community and artist partnerships with the City

Identify short-term and long-term goals toward increasing the budget for the Office of the Arts.

5.4

5.4.1
Increase knowledge of "non-arts funds" available to city governments from local, state, regional, and national public and private funding sources including corporate and public/private partnerships.

5.4.2
Identify redundancies in services - internal to the Office of the Arts and external to other Departments - to realize cost savings in the budget of the Office of the Arts.

5.4.3
Based on city events review, identify any opportunities for revenue generating events.

5.4.4
Adopt annual City Council resolutions to recognize National Arts and Humanities Month.

5.4.5
Research a structure for a Mayor's Arts Award initiative that partners with private sector funders to recognize creativity in Alexandria.

TIMELINE
Mid-term - Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Private sector funders and sponsors

OUTCOMES
Increase in resources available to Office of Arts; increase in community awareness of Office of the Arts, arts organizations, artists; increase in efficiency of the departmental budget

Create metrics for baseline measurement and ongoing monitoring of social impact of arts and culture.

5.5

5.5.1

Work with the Office of Performance and Accountability to develop specific metrics aligning with the City Strategic Plan. Work to identify intra- and cross departmental indicators and metrics for arts-related activities. This may include programming, place-making initiatives, or civic events.

5.5.2

Develop perception study with baseline and consistent monitoring of resident and visitor perceptions of arts and culture in the city. Work with other city departments and possibly with Visit Alexandria to incorporate appropriate questions into existing community and visitor surveys.

5.5.3

Align the annual work plan with approved and relevant city plans and reports.

TIMELINE

Mid-term - Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

City departments; Visit Alexandria

OUTCOMES

Quantitative data and statistics on arts impact for internal and external planning and promotions

Build the Commission for the Arts membership to be reflective of Alexandria's geographic and demographic diversity.

5.6

5.6.1

Update the current Commission for the Arts profile including specific criteria for geography, demographics, industry, and knowledge/skill base (Cross-reference 2.1).

5.6.2

Develop an active recruitment program. This may be based on the small area community outline[7] and/or other profile criteria.

[7] *https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/masterplan/CityMasterPlanMapDec2015.pdf*

Based on best practices, establish programs and workshops for new Arts Commission members and existing Arts Commission members.

5.7

5.7.1

For new members, establish an orientation and onboarding program providing guidance on leadership, and roles and responsibilities.

5.7.2

For existing members, schedule workshops and training sessions on leadership, advocacy and others deemed important.

TIMELINE

Mid-term - Long-Term

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Not Applicable

OUTCOMES

Commission for the Arts profile representing the whole community; increase in advocacy for the arts

MODELS

See Appendix: Model Arts Commission Trends

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Introduction

Implementation of this city-wide cultural plan relies on a number of interrelated factors, players, and actions. Leadership within the city is the most important element for implementation, as well as the community's embracing and advocating for the plan.

The plan requires the ongoing, daily focus of the Office of the Arts and will be successful through collaborations and partnerships across city government and the community. It is recommended after plan adoption that it be integrated into the recently completed Strategic Plan for Alexandria. The arts and creative sectors will provide the creative spark needed for Alexandria to become a vibrant and exciting place, although the heart of the plan is supporting and facilitating artistic and creative expression for all residents, and fostering an environment where arts are valued as a core function of the city.

The Office of the Arts and the Alexandria Commission for the Arts currently develop annual work plans and establish annual task forces based on agreed upon priorities for each fiscal year. This implementation plan provides a framework for developing annual plans. Successful plan implementation requires a leadership body to guide the plan through the different phases and to manage partnerships and necessary relationships within the community. This may be an appropriate role for the Alexandria Commission for the Arts, or best be served by establishing a specific task force to guide implementation, consistent with the Public Art Implementation Plan. This task force will work with staff to develop annual work plans, focusing first on near term priorities and developing a process for monitoring the goals, initiatives, and success metrics. City-approved plans will be reviewed by the taskforce in order to coordinate and align the annual plan to the existing plans.

To support the core goals of this plan, the Office of the Arts requires additional human resources for full plan implementation. One concept specifically addressing diversity goals and community engagement priorities is an approach involving citizen-based "staff" leadership. This provides better connection with the community, particularly with immigrant communities and those seeking support to celebrate their unique cultural heritage. This approach is currently in practice in Portland, Oregon' CELs program.

The City of Alexandria is in the process of updating the online portal for special events permitting. It is anticipated this will streamline and simplify the process for those seeking permits and create efficiencies for special events staff. These efficiencies may provide the opportunity to restructure special events staff positions to better align with plan goals.

The Alexandria Commission for the Arts has the opportunity to redefine its role in relation to this plan in several ways. First, it has the opportunity to redefine commission membership to be more reflective of the geographic, socioeconomic and demographic diversity of Alexandria. This challenge is not unique to the Arts Commission, and it offers the opportunity for the Arts Commission to take the lead on developing a model and process that may benefit other City boards and commissions.

Staff capacity may be achieved in a variety of ways including the addition of FTE's when financially feasible, restructuring and reclassifying existing positions, and/or extending existing positions. Implementation of this plan will be achieved through building the capacity of the Office with core competencies and functions, including:

- ***Programming Capacity*** *– Establishing a position or realigning/restructuring an existing position for a program director with extensive experience in visioning and executing innovative, compelling and exciting programs. The individual responsible for this programming capacity would ideally bring a new sensibility to programming through scanning of the existing resources (financial, human, physical – such as parks and public spaces, etc.), reviewing current trends, establishing new partnerships, and building on untapped artistic and cultural assets.*

- ***Community Engagement Capacity*** *– Establishing a new position or restructuring an existing position with experience in community organizing, building relationships with and between nonprofit cultural organizations, community and neighborhood associations, community advocacy organizations, and similar community assets. Ideally the capacities brought to this position Additional benefits of adding this expertise and competency to the Office of the Arts may include supporting to the Alexandria Commission for the Arts as they work towards redefining their composition; connecting the Office of the Arts across the community through attending monthly meetings of neighborhood councils to provide guidance and information regarding city policies and services; developing and promoting sustainable cultural and heritage events; debriefing with city staff colleagues on community activities that would support tourism, public cultural events and a merger of neighborhood organizations into funding programs provided by the Office of the Arts; providing information, referral, and coordination to link staff and families with appropriate city resources; and establishing or restructuring staffing to utilize such models as the "Community Engagement Liaisons" (CELs).*[8]

In addition to building the capacity of the Office of the Arts through the core competencies, there is a need for at least two specific positions to meet the current and growing demand on the Office of the Arts. These core support positions take into account the growing portfolio of the Office of the Arts as well as the support capacity necessary to fully implement this plan.

- ***Full-time Public Art Manager*** *– Given both the number of existing projects and the potential for new projects, the proposed new position would report to the Director of the Office of the Arts, and be primarily responsible for the development and implementation of a multitude of complex public art projects that result from the City of Alexandria's public art goals and policies. The duties of this position would include the administration, coordination, and review of key phases of the public art process for projects identified by the Director of the Office of the Arts. The Public Art Network at Americans for the Arts is an ample resource to assist in drafting a full position description and models for integrating a full-time position into the ongoing operations of city arts divisions.*[9]

- ***Full-time Administrative Assistant*** *– The Office of the Arts would benefit from having a full-time administrative support staff person. This position would follow the City of Alexandria's job functions as outlined in existing job categories to perform administrative and office support activities, supporting the Director of the Office of the Arts and other full-time staff. Duties may include fielding telephone calls, word processing, creating spreadsheets and presentations, and supporting the administrative duties associated with the Commission for the Arts.*

[8] *https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/?c=62226&a=482264*

[9] *https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/networks-and-councils/public-art-network/pan-year-in-review-database*

The following implementation grid includes these columns, from left to right:

TIMELINE

Near-Term (1-3 years), Mid-Term (4-7 years), Long-Term (8-10 years)

AND RECOMMENDATION

These columns correlate with the five core goals and the associated strategies.

PARTNER(S)

Abbreviations for partners indicated for implementation.

- **AAA** - *Alexandria Arts Alliance*
- **AC** - *Alexandria Commission for the Arts*
- **ACPS** - *Alexandria City Public Schools*
- **AEDP** - *Alexandria Economic Development Partnership*
- **ARHA** - *Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority*
- **CLT** - *Cultural Organizations*
- **CMO** - *Office of the City Manager*
- **CNA** - *Community and neighborhood associations*
- **CPD** - *City Planning and Development Department*
- **CPI** - *Office of Communications and Public Information*
- **DGS** - *Department of General Services*
- **DH** - *Department Heads*
- **DP** - *Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities*
- **NAEA** - *National Arts Educators Assoc.*
- **NOVA** - *Northern VA Community College*
- **OA** - *Office of the Arts*
- **OHA** - *Office of Historic Alexandria*
- **OHR** - *Office of Human Rights*
- **OPA** - *Office of Performance and Accountability*
- **PP** - *Private Philanthropy*
- **SE** - *Special Events*
- **VA** - *Visit Alexandria*

RESOURCES

Human and financial resources needed for implementation.

Goal One - Achieve equity, inclusion and access for arts, cultural and creative endeavors.

1

NEAR TERM TO MID TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
1.1	Build the capacity of the Office of the Arts to serve as a role model for best practices in the area of equity and access.			
1.1.1	Work towards the development of guiding principles and policies committing to equity, access and inclusion in City arts and cultural activities and with the Commission for the Arts.	OA; AC		AFTA Cultural Equity Policy
1.1.2	Facilitate and sponsor a series of cultural competency training programs for staff and commissioners to recognize and acknowledge that differences in language, age, culture, socio -economic status, political and religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, and life experiences add challenging dimensions to the dynamics of cross cultural interactions. (cross reference with 1.6).			
1.2.3	Recruit implementation task force members to broadly represent the geographic, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups that reflect the diversity of Alexandria.			
1.1.3	Investigate and pursue arts funding strategies for community initiated projects, and collaborative funding mechanisms.	OA	PP; OHA	Staff time
1.1.5	Create an asset inventory of all available arts and cultural resources in neighborhoods.	OA	CLT; OHA; ARHA	Additional partnership with Small Area Plan organizations and neighborhood associations. Staff time
1.1.6	Explore ways to infuse arts into appropriate city projects which address city priorities – housing, youth services, transportation, and health and wellness, recreational/arts programming.	OA	AC; ACPS; ARHA; OHR	

MID TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
1.2	Work to eliminate access barriers to arts and cultural programming for all residents, communities, and groups including underserved constituencies (homeless, veterans, seniors, and intellectually and physically disabled populations).	OA	CLT	
1.2.1	Work with community leaders and organizations to Identify barriers including financial (cost), geographic (transportation), attitudinal (feeling welcome), and cultural (relevance).	OA	CLT	Staff time. Ideally creating position for community development. Communicating barriers and findings with city leadership
1.2.2	Facilitate and sponsor a series of cultural competency training programs for staff and commissioners to recognize and acknowledge that differences in language, age, culture, socio -economic status, political and religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, and life experiences add challenging dimensions to the dynamics of cross cultural interactions. (cross reference with 1.6).			Supports are provided through both financial resources (grants) and policy development. Work with OHA on contemporary responses to Alexandria history and the specific history of individual communities
1.3	Recruit implementation task force members to broadly represent the geographic, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups that reflect the diversity of Alexandria.			

MID TERM TO LONG TERM

1.3.1	Work with arts and cultural institutions and organizations to create collaborations and opportunities for programming "outside of the walls".	OA	CLT; AAA	Staff time. Appropriate for new community development position.
1.3.2	Support and facilitate cultural programming in non-traditional venues and throughout Alexandria's neighborhoods. This may include partnerships with recreation centers and libraries.		OHA	Coordination with department wide staff
1.3.3	Engage diverse, qualified artists to provide programming in neighborhood settings.			$10,000 to launch initiative; staff time to develop operating procedures
1.3.4	Establish appropriate advisory taskforces to explore tangible initiatives that elevate the community narratives.	OA	OHA	Staff time/ Community partnerships Build into annual workplans.

Goal Two - Facilitate opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

2

MID TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
2.2	Be a catalyst to developing creative maker spaces and intentional incubators.			
2.2.1	Work with existing businesses (possibly through the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership) and educational institutions to develop economically viable creative maker/ incubator and retail spaces in various locations throughout the city.	OA	DGS; AEDP; DP; PP	Staff time. Robust partnerships.

LONG TERM

2.1	Capitalize on existing city venues and spaces to grow arts programming (performance, visual art exhibition and studio, rehearsal, etc.) for the residents of the city.			
2.1.1	Reimagine existing spaces in Alexandria, possibly as a collaborative community arts center. Convene community groups to develop the vision and strategy for where the center(s) are and what they offer. This may include fundraising partners, private sector support, tiered usage fees, guest curators, etc.	OA	DGS; CMO; DP; CDP	
2.1.2	Assess the availability of existing unused or vacant spaces and properties throughout the city and create an inventory of potential spaces (in order to connect the need with availability).	OA	DGS	Staff time, Potentially work with SpaceFinder DC to assist with format and provide a platform for an on-line inventory of spaces.
2.3	Work to plan a signature festival for innovation, arts, and creativity.			
2.3.1	Create a design-oriented or unique arts experience appealing to different sectors and groups in the city. The intent is to primarily connect with the large demographic of young professionals in the community, although will appeal to most residents.	OA	SE; VA; AEDP; CLT	Develop relationships with groups like Northern VA Urban League to design Young Professionals advisory group

Goal Three - Support and foster a sustainable and diverse community of the arts.

3

MID TERM TO LONG TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
3.1	Increase the funding base for the Arts Grants Program aligning with the goals of this plan.	OA	AC; DP; CMO; AAA	
3.2 thru 3.2.7	Restructure the Grants Program to recognize the specific institutional needs of full-time, professionally managed organizations while seeking to maintain the current level of support for the community-based and volunteer led cultural organizations. A framework for a restructured Arts Grants Program may be: • **4.2.1 Institutional Support for Professional Organizations** - *Review and streamline the existing operating grants for organizations with professional staff and annual operating or programmatic grants to ensure stable operations of the largest organizations, while providing support for programmatic depth and exploration.* • **4.2.2 Community-based, Volunteer-led Organizations** - *Streamline the application process for the existing project grant to encourage more community-based organization applicants.* • **4.2.3 Emerging Organizational Support** - *Establish a distinct program intended to support emerging organizations – specifically those with fewer than five years of operations – in becoming established. The intent of the program is to encourage new programming in the community and entrepreneurial activity by new and emerging organizations.* • **4.2.4 Artist Fellowship Program** - *Create an annual artist fellowship program to support individual artists living and working in Alexandria. Ideally the program would include three categories – new/emerging; mid-career and late-career - to recognize artists across the spectrum of tenure.*	OA	AC; DP; CMO	Current budget level is approximately $172,000. Commit resources incrementally over time to begin to test the recommended grant programs and investments in capacity building.

3

MID TERM TO LONG TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
3.2 thru 3.2.7 cont.	• **4.2.5 Special Opportunities, Risk and Innovations Fund** - *Create a fund to incentivize entrepreneurial activity, develop innovative programs, and in special circumstances, to build programmatic or organizational capacity. A competitive grant is awarded each cycle and is open to existing arts organizations, other organizations providing or considering cultural programming, as well as one-time projects developed by non-cultural organizations. These are one-time investments in ideas, regardless of organizational budget size. It is recommended that individuals be eligible as well as organizations.* • **4.2.6 Capacity Building and Professional Development** - *Create an initiative to increase the management capacities of nonprofits arts organizations. Collaborate with educational institutions for business, marketing, project management, and other leadership development programming. Establish a pool of funds available on a revolving, responsive basis (not through annual awards) to support professional development and organizational capacity.* • **4.2.7 Neighborhood Celebrations Program Fund** - *Create a fund for community-led celebrations encouraging cross-cultural exchange and widening access opportunities for residents and visitors. This provides funding along with management and technical support from the Office of the Arts. Part of the program will include*	OA	AC; DP; CMO	Current budget level is approximately $172,000. Commit resources incrementally over time to begin to test the recommended grant programs and investments in capacity building.

NEAR TERM

3.3	Serve as a convener of the Alexandria arts community to facilitate learning of trends in the professional arts field and current professional practices.	OA	CLT; AAA	Staff time. Resources for engaging outside presenters.
3.3.1	Program semi-annual gatherings of the Alexandria arts community with appropriate speakers and presenters on relevant topics.	OA	AAA	Staff time. Resources for engaging outside presenters.

Goal Four - Be a convener and facilitator for artistic and cultural expression.

4

MID TERM TO LONG TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
4.1	Celebrate the diverse neighborhoods of Alexandria through support of existing events and opportunity for new collaborations.	OA		
4.1.1	Convene organizers and community leaders to explore ways to promote and support existing neighborhood events and share best practices.	OA	Local nonprofits and neighborhood associations	Community Engagement Manager/staff time.
4.1.2	Develop a neighborhood grant category supporting neighborhood festivals and improved infrastructure for presenting the visual, performing and literary arts in neighborhood settings. This may also include new community- initiated event funding.	OA		Staff time to develop collaborations city departments like Library Dept.; Community and Human Services
4.2	Develop a Community Engagement Strategy facilitating arts and creative opportunities for every neighborhood and community group.	OA		
4.2.1	Develop relationships with diverse community leaders throughout Alexandria.	OA	Local nonprofits and neighborhood associations	Community Engagement Manager/staff time.
4.2.2	Develop a roster of artists and groups qualified to provide arts programming in community settings. Highlight and promote these artists through city communications.	OA	AAA; local artists	Develop a set of criteria to establish roster and solicit artists for inclusion on the roster that meet criteria
4.2.3	Identify and work with qualified artists in their own communities to create new artistic projects or events celebrating community and existing programs such as the Mobile Arts Lab.	OA	AAA; local artists; neighborhood associations	Designate funds for artist's stipends, either through reallocation or increasing program budget. See 'CEL' note above.
4.2.4	Work with public information office on a public awareness and education campaign to raise awareness of happenings in neighborhoods outside of Old Town.	OA	CMO; PIO	Staff time. Possible branding expert fees.

4

NEAR TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
4.3	Support and strengthen arts education and life-long learning opportunities in Alexandria.	OA	ACPS; NOVA	
4.3.1	Plan a series of convenings of arts educators, parents, and city staff to identify best role for the city role in arts education initiatives.	OA	ACPS	Staff Time
4.3.2	Continue to identify partnerships and collaborations between the communities and the school system to strengthen both in-school arts education and out-of-school arts education. This may include the identification of internships and apprenticeships in arts and creative industries.	OA	ACPS	Staff time/Community Engagement Manager
4.3.3	Connect teachers with community artists to provide collaborative support in and outside the classroom.	OA	ACPS	

Goal Five - Raise community awareness of the Office of the Arts as it continues to evolve as a leadership agency.

5

NEAR TERM/ONGOING

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
5.1	Position The Office of the Arts within the construct of the city's decision-making process and prioritize arts and culture as a deliverable of "core" public services.	OA	CMO; AC	
5.1.1	Convene regular meetings with heads of city departments involved with planning, public and neighborhood services, and with libraries and other relevant departments to explore inter-departmental collaborations.	OA; CMO	DH	Staff Time
5.1.2	Continue to collect and share data regarding the economic impact of the arts in Alexandria through the AEP. Explore additional resources such as investing in use of the Creative Vitality Index.	OA	VA; AEDP; CLT; CPI	Fees for AEP, CVI, other appropriate research. CVI licensing fees are $4,000- $5,000 annually: AEP is approximately $6,000 every five years.
5.1.3	Spotlight successes of funded organizations and artists to help increase visibility of projects that leverage city funds.	OA	CPI; AAA	Investment in developing materials for print and on-line to highlight. Developing a communications strategy
5.1.4	Establish a community taskforce to plan and respond to city planning goals across departments as part of the annual workplan process.	OA	PP; CLT; CPI; AAA	Staff Time
5.3	Rebrand the Office of the Arts and Enhance the Arts and Cultural City Brand.			
5.3.1	Work with the Office of Communications and Public Information on a public information strategy to raise the awareness of the office to the community-atlarge through public campaigns, speaking engagements, sponsorships, social media campaigns, and more.	OA	CPI	Staff time; consider contracting professional branding expertise
5.3.2	Develop a new narrative about the quality of life in Alexandria. Create a standard toolkit of messages inclusive of arts and creativity, creative sector and economic impact data, diverse communities' arts and cultural events, and more.	OA	VA; CPI	

NEAR TERM/ONGOING

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
5.3.3	Align city brand marketing efforts with Visit Alexandria and Alexandria Economic Development Partnership.	OA	VA; CPI	
5.3.4	Explore opportunities with educational institutions and other community organizations and artists to create narratives, and highlight stories of arts and creativity for marketing efforts.	OA	ACPS; NOVA; CPI; OHR	Development of on-line portal to collect community stories.

MID TERM TO LONG TERM

5.4	Identify short term and long term goals toward increasing the budget for the Office of the Arts.			
5.4.1	Increase knowledge of "non-arts funds" available to city governments from local, state, regional and national public and private funding sources, including corporate and public/private partnerships.	OA	PP	Partnerships with area educational institutions to develop research internships
5.4.2	Identify redundancies internal to the Office and external to other Departments in services to realize cost savings in the budget of the Office of the Arts.	OA; DP; OPA	CMO	Staff Time
5.4.3	Based on City events review, identify any opportunities for revenue-generating events.	OA	SE; DP	Staff time; potential for ad hoc committee and/or workshop for the Alexandria Commission for the Arts
5.4.4	Adopt annual City Council resolutions to recognize National Arts and Humanities Month.	OA	CMO	Staff time and alignment with AFTA planning
5.4.5	Research a structure for a "Mayor's Arts Award" initiative that partners with private sector funders to recognize creativity in Alexandria.	OA	VA; AEDP; AAA	Partnerships with area educational institutions to develop research internships to develop awards program. Partner with Alexandria Arts Alliance to organize and promote awards.

5

MID TERM TO LONG TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
5.5	Create metrics for baseline measurement and ongoing monitoring of social impact of arts and culture.	OA	DP; OPA	
5.5.1	Work with the Office of Performance and Accountability to develop specific metrics aligning with the City Strategic Plan. Work to identify intra- and crossdepartmental indicators and metrics for arts-related activities. This may include programming, placemaking initiatives, or civic events.	OA	DP; CMO; OPA	Staff Time
5.5.2	Develop perception study with baseline and consistent monitoring of resident and visitor perceptions of arts and culture in the city. Work with other city departments and Visit Alexandria to incorporate appropriate questions into existing community and visitor surveys.	OA	DP; OPA; VA	Partnerships with area educational institutions to develop research internships
5.5.3	Align the annual work plan with approved and relevant city plans and reports.			
5.6	Build the Commission for the Arts membership to be reflective of Alexandria's geographic and demographic diversity.	OA; AC	DP; CMO	Best practices models; working with City Council to adopt updated Arts Commission profile and recruitment process.
5.6.1	Update the current Commission for the Arts profile including specific criteria for geography, demographics, industry, and knowledge/skill base.	OA; AC		Ad hoc committee for the Alexandria Commission for the Arts to focus on profile and on-boarding.
5.6.2	Develop an active recruitment program based on the small area community outline and/or other profile criteria.	OA; AC		

5

MID TERM TO LONG TERM

#	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD/CO-LEADS	PARTNER(S)	RESOURCES
5.7	Based on best practices, establish an orientation and onboarding program for new Commission for the Arts members providing guidance on leadership, roles and responsibilities, advocacy, and programming.	AC; OA	DP; CMO	
5.7.1	For new members, establish an orientation and onboarding program providing guidance on leadership, and roles and responsibilities	AC; OA	DP; CMO	Staff Time/Commission time
5.7.2	For existing members, schedule workshops and training sessions on leadership, advocacy and others deemed important.	AC; OA	DP; CMO	Staff Time/Commission time/possible consultant or trainer fees

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